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MY LIFE AMONG THE INDIANS.

BY BISHOP WHIPPLE, OF MINNESOTA.

I HAVE been requested to write for THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW my Indian experiences.

In 1859 there were twenty thousand Indians in Minnesota. They belonged to the two great families of northern Indians—the Algonquins, whose beautiful language was heard by the Pilgrim fathers, and the Dacotahs, whose bands extended from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. Both were noble types of wild men. They were hereditary foes, but neither knew the origin of their hatred. The Dacotahs, or Sioux, were the Indians of the prairie and the more warlike. The Ojibways, or Chipeways, were the Indians of the forest and the more cunning. Their habits and customs were similar; their languages totally different. The language of the Dacotahs has more vowels, sounds harsher, and is stronger. The Ojibway is the language of poetry and is made up largely of labials and liquids. Nearly every Indian word of Longfellow's "Hiawatha" is Ojibway. Indian words are descriptive. "Chair" in English is arbitrary; "a-pu-bi-win" in Ojibway is "the something on which he sits." Names of persons or places are descriptive, and are often changed. A mother names her boy Ne-in-dah—"the passing cloud"; in manhood he may receive the name Taopi—"the wounded one." In English the verb "I love" is the same when applied to a person, a thing, a quality of mind or of matter. If an Ojibway says, "I love," and stops, you can tell by the inflection of the verb who it is or what it is he loves. These unwritten Indian tongues are marvellous for their beauty and power, and are capable of conveying as nice shades of meaning as classic Greek.

The Indian is not in any gross sense an idolator. His universe is peopled with spirits. He recognizes a Great Spirit; he believes in a future life. He has a passionate love for his chil-

dren, and will gladly die for his people. He is a true friend and a bitter enemy. I have never known of an instance where the Indian was the first to violate plighted faith. General H. H. Sibley, the chief factor of the Northwest Fur Company, says that for thirty years it was the boast of the Sioux that they had never taken the life of a white man. The Hon. Henry M. Rice, the chief factor among the Chippeways, bears like testimony to their firm friendship and honesty.

Thirty years ago our Indian system was at its worst. It was a blunder and a crime. It recognized nomadic tribes as independent nations. It destroyed the advisory power of the chiefs and gave nothing in its place. It recognized no personal rights of property ; it gave no protection to person or life ; it punished no crime. Its emoluments were rewards for political service, and most of its solemn treaties were framed to use the Indian as a key to unlock the public treasury. At best it established heathen almshouses to graduate savage paupers. Three white men passed a sleeping Indian. One said, "I will kill the damned redskin," and drew his rifle and shot him. No one was punished. An Indian woman died in a border village from brutal violence. The agent was appealed to and said, "It is none of my business." A mixed-blood killed an Indian woman ; he was arrested and sent to the nearest United States fort. After three months in the guard-house the Secretary of War ordered his discharge, saying that there was no law to punish an Indian.

It was not strange that the poor heathen, surrounded by evil influences, were dragged to a depth of sorrow which their heathen fathers never knew, and that robbery and wrong brought a perennial harvest of blood. Statesmen and philanthropists pleaded in vain. Changes were made, but the system was unreformed. Secretary Barbour asked Congress to remove the bureau from the War Department. It was done ; but spurious coin is not made good by changing pockets.

Friends advised me not to undertake any Indian missions. In my boyhood I listened to the stories of an old soldier of the Mohawk, whose life had been spent among the Indians. A sainted mother taught me to defend the weak. I believed that these wandering redmen were children of one God and Father, and that he loved them as he loved us. I carried it where I love to take anything which troubles me, and I vowed that, God being

my helper, I would never turn my back on the heathen at my door. I have tried to keep the vow.

Three weeks after I reached my diocese I visited the Indian mission at Gull Lake. I had pictured the Indian of Cooper; the gay dress of wild men and women; the picturesque wigwam with its trophies of war and the chase; the happy groups of dark-haired women and children. We had hardly entered the forest before we came to the new-made grave of an Indian killed in a drunken brawl. The first wigwam was a scene of desolation,—dirty, squalid, half-naked children; a poor mother standing in the snow scraping the pitch from the inner bark of the pine-tree to satisfy the gnawing hunger of her starving babes; a young girl dying from scrofula: all a picture of woe to make me cry, “How long, how long, O Lord?”

The lights and shadows of that first visit are the epitome of years. We held a sweet service in the log church of St. Columba on the banks of the loveliest of Minnesota lakes. The service was strange to me. I only knew one word, and that is the same in every tongue—“Jesus.” It made us of kin. I preached through an interpreter and tried to tell the old, old story so as to reach these hearts. After service I was asked to bury an Indian child. It was at even when the shadows of the pine-tree rested on the grave. Never did service sound sweeter than as I christened this Indian lamb “dust to dust” in the acre of God. An Indian burial is sacred. The mother lays the child’s treasures in the grave; friends place the weapons of war and the chase in the warrior’s hands, and the faithful dog is slain to bear his master company to the happy hunting-grounds. After the service the mother brought me a lock of hair, black as a raven’s wing, and said: “I have heard that when white mothers lose their babes, they have the hair made into a cross to remind them of the baby who has gone and of Jesus who has taken it. Will Keche-muck-a-day-a-konay have my baby’s hair made into a cross?”

Surely an Indian mother’s heart is like a white mother’s heart. In several wigwams I saw a little bundle ornamented with strips of bead-work. The bereaved mother had taken the things which belonged to her dead child and made a bundle and ornamented it; and this she carried for a year in memory of her child. They believe that the departed spirit lingers by the grave, and offerings of bread are often placed beside it. I once saw an

old man sitting on the bank of the upper Mississippi. I called him, and said : " Friend, come and dine with me." After dinner I said : " I have plenty of provisions. I shall be in the Indian country a week longer. If you will go with me, I will feed you, and when we part I will give you all the stores I have left." He said : " You have a kind heart. I thank you. My old wife is sleeping in a grave yonder. I cannot go away from her, for she will be lonesome."

I held my first Indian council at Gull Lake. The Lord Bishop of Rochester said to me : " An Indian council has all the dignity of the House of Lords, with this difference—that the House of Lords never listen ; the Indians always do." The speaker rises, shakes hands with the principal men in the audience, drops his blanket from his right shoulder, leaving his arm free for gestures, and in a simple, straightforward manner presents his subject, enforcing his argument by many illustrations drawn from nature and daily life. They never interrupt a speaker. The last words of every speech are, " I have done."

In these early visits I heard many stories to make my cheeks blush for shame. The Ojibways justly claimed arrears of more than \$50,000 under old treaties, which had never been paid. They sold some of the most beautiful land in Minnesota for one cent and a half an acre, under the promise that it should become the home of a friendly body of Indians, who would be a protection against their enemies, the Dacotahs. The treaty was made, and the country was immediately opened for white settlement. The Dacotahs had sold 800,000 acres of their reservation upon the plea that they needed more money for civilization. They waited four years and never received one penny ; it was all taken for claims. This, and the withholding of their annuities for two months, precipitated that awful massacre of 1862 in which 800 of our citizens were slain. It is not easy to answer these overtrue charges of robbery, or even to condemn the Indian for his sins.

On a visit to the Dacotah mission a scalp-dance was held near the mission-house. I was indignant. I went to Wabasha, the head chief, and said : " Wabasha, you asked me for a missionary and teacher. I gave them to you. I visit you, and the first sight is this brutal scalp-dance. I knew the Chippeway whom your young men have murdered ; he had a wife and children ; his wife

is crying for her husband; his children are asking for their father. Wabasha, the Great Spirit hears his children cry. He is angry. Some day he will ask Wabasha, 'Where is your red brother?' " The old chief smiled, drew his pipe from his mouth, blew a cloud of smoke upward, and said: "White man go to war with his own brother in the same country; kill more men than Wabasha can count in all his life. Great Spirit smiles; says, 'Good white man; he has my book; I love him very much; I have a good place for him by-and-by.' The Indian is a wild man; he has no Great Spirit book; he kills one man; has a scalp-dance; Great Spirit is mad, and says, 'Bad Indian; I will put him in a bad place by-and-by.' Wabasha don't believe it."

The Indian has a keen appreciation of humor, and is like a child in his mirthfulness. No orator can see the weak points in his adversary's armor or silence a foolish speaker more quickly.

Old Shah-bah-skong, the head chief of Mille Lac, brought all his warriors to defend Fort Ripley in 1862. The Secretary of the Interior, and the Governor and Legislature of Minnesota, promised these Indians that for this act of bravery they should have the special care of the government and never be removed. A few years later, a special agent was sent from Washington to ask the Ojibways to cede their lands and remove to a country north of Leech Lake. The agent asked my help. I said: "I know that country. I have camped on it. It is the most worthless strip of land in Minnesota. The Indians are not fools. Don't attempt this folly. You will surely come to grief." He called the Indians in council, and said: "My red brothers, your great father has heard how you have been wronged. He said, 'I will send them an honest man.' He looked in the North, the South, the East, and the West. When he saw me, he said, 'This is the honest man whom I will send to my red children.' Brothers, look at me! The winds of fifty-five years have blown over my head and silvered it over with gray, and in all that time I have never done wrong to any man. As your friend, I ask you to sign this treaty."

Old Shah-bah-skong sprang to his feet and said: "My friend, look at me! The winds of more than fifty winters have blown over my head and silvered it over with gray; but they have not blown *my* brains away."

That council was ended.

An agent who had won the distinction of a militia general desired to impress the Indians. Dressed in uniform, with chapeau and sword, he said : " Your great father thinks that one reason why he has had so much trouble with the Indians is that he has always sent to them civilians. This time he said, ' These red men are warriors ; I will send to them a warrior,' and he sent me." An old chief arose, drew a long breath and said : " I have heard ever since I was a boy that white men had their great warriors. I have always wanted to see one. I have looked at him, and I am now ready to die."

Since that first visit, after I had made a visitation in the white field, I went into the Indian country and travelled each year from 500 to 1,500 miles on foot or in a birch-bark canoe, going from Indian village to village, to hear their tale of sorrow and with a brother's heart and hand to try to help them.

At first we saw very little fruit. The work seemed hopeless. The Indian medicine-men, who made gain of their people, were our bitter foes. Old Shah-dah-yence, the leading medicine-man of the nation, was my Alexander Coppersmith. A Christian Indian died in the triumphs of faith. His last words were to ask friends to follow him to the other home. The next day all the medicine-men of the band disappeared. They were gone a month. One day they came back with blackened faces (Indian mourning) and in rags. The people asked what it meant. The medicine-men said : " It is too awful to tell." After much persuasion, they revealed the awful secret. They said : " We travelled far in the forest and held a fast. The Great Spirit showed us the other world. We saw this Christian Indian wandering alone. He told us that when he died he went to the white man's heaven and asked admission. The angel at the gate said : ' Who are you?' He said : ' A Christian Ojibway.' The angel shook his head and said : ' This is a white man's heaven. No Ojibway has ever come here. There are happy hunting-grounds for the Ojibways. You must go there.' He travelled until he came to the red man's heaven, and asked admission. The angel at the gate asked him : ' Who are you?' He answered : ' A Christian Ojibway.' The angel shook his head and said : ' The Ojibways are medicine-men. If you are a Christian, you must go to the other heaven.' The poor man would have to wander alone forever."

Old Shah-dah-yence had a great desire to have his son edu-

cated, and we brought him, with other Indian children, to Faribault. At wayside inns the border people would gather about the wagon and say: "Wonder what he is going to do with these Injun children." "Perhaps he thinks he can make Christians out of them." "It can't be did." "You might as well tame a weasel." Four of these boys became ministers of the church. This old medicine-man learned from his son to believe in Jesus Christ, and I have never known any man whose whole life was more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Christ. In his old age I have known him to walk to Red Lake, seventy miles, to tell his people of the love which filled his heart.

In those early days my visits to Washington were oft-repeated stories of blighted hopes. I found President Lincoln a willing listener. I told him the story of the massacre of 1862, when 300 miles of our border was one track of blood. As I repeated the story of specific acts of dishonesty, the President said: "Did you ever hear of the Southern man who bought monkeys to pick cotton? They were quick; their long, slim fingers would pull out the cotton faster than negroes; but he found it took two overseers to watch one monkey. This Indian business needs ten honest men to watch one Indian agent."

From the martyred President I received the highest compliment ever paid to me. He said to a friend: "As I listened to Bishop Whipple's story of robbery and shame, I felt it to my boots"; and, rising to his full height, he said: "If I live, this accursed system shall be reformed." He would have done it.

Secretary Stanton said to General Halleck: "What does Bishop Whipple want? If he came here to tell us that our Indian system is a sink of iniquity, tell him we all know it. Tell him the United States government never redresses a wrong until the people demand it. When he reaches the heart of the people, the Indians will be saved."

As I recall those early days, there come to me many sweet memories of the heroism of my Indian friends. All that sheds light on the days when I was walking on my heart is the story of Indian bravery. Other Day, Taopi, Wabasha, Good Thunder, Simon Anagmani, Lorenzo Laurence, Wah-hau-ca-ma-za, and many others were heroes as the world measures heroes. Taopi carried to his grave a certificate saying, "Taopi, a wounded man, is entitled to the lasting gratitude of the United States for

having, with other Christian Indians, rescued 200 white women and children during the Sioux war." He died of a broken heart. His last words to me were : " The Great Spirit has called me to go on the last journey. I am not afraid, for Jesus is going with me, and I shall not be lonesome on the road." Dear old Good Thunder, chief of scouts, is living at Birch Cooley. He came to his old home and bought eighty acres of land. He said to me : " I have came back to my old home. I cannot live without a ' tipi wakon,' where I can worship the Great Spirit. If you will build my people a church, I will give you twenty acres of land." No guest is more welcome in my home than this Christian chief.

Generals Terry, Miles, Stanley, and Custer have again and again borne tribute to the fidelity of these scouts. After General Custer returned from the Black Hills, he wrote to the Rev. Mr. Hinman : " I cannot allow these scouts to return to their homes without bearing testimony to their fidelity. I not only say they have proved good soldiers; I doubt if any village can show thirty men of more exemplary character. Among many pleasant incidents I recall one Sunday in camp when suddenly I heard the familiar tune, ' Rock of Ages.' Knowing that cavalymen were not noted for hymn-singing, I followed the sound and found that the sons of men who roamed over these prairies in barbarous wildness were engaged in the worship of God."

To Emmegahbowh, Bad Boy, Shah-bah-skong, and other faithful souls we owe the protection of our northern frontier. Many of them have gone before to the land, as Red Cloud once said, " where it is hoped white men will tell no lies."

In the hopes which come to me at eventide there are none sweeter than that in our Father's home we shall meet many of these men of the trembling eye and wandering foot, to whom we were permitted to give a brother's sympathy, a brother's love, and a brother's prayers.

If I do not weary your readers, I shall be glad to tell them what the gospel has done for these red men in leading them into the light of Christian civilization.

H. B. WHIPPLE.